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Bard

ALL I ASK IS RAIN

All I ask is rain
all I ask is wind
all I ask is cold
all I ask is fog
or even mist
all I ask is weather
you can feel, weather
that makes me feel
someone is talking
and talking to me
rubbing against me
telling the new truth

all I ask is weather that tells the truth
all I ask is the truth

the cold wet morning loves me

3 May 2004

=====

But I was trying to say a different thing
and I got in the way

something about me instead
a kind of semi-permanent plantation
some other planet set out here
they could keep in touch with
and use to send their signals through
and I'm allowed to live in, my body,

a lighthouse keeper who keeps
confusing himself with the light.

3 May 2004

=====

worrying about the cool air
to make it last
I know the worrying will
go on and on
yet it's the one thing I could control

3 V 04

<late>

INSPECTION TIME

The bed made.

Books all over the house
seem animate to me.

Everything does.

My problem

in a nutshell

is a nutshell, an organic
embrace, a wall

that holds everything

in, behind it

conspiracies grow long

beards and ball games

yammer on tv eternally

almost.

Never a moment
when the brain's not in the head.

Never a moment when the mind
is in the brain. The nutshell.

Nothing nestled inside nothing

and it keeps talking to me.

3 May 2004

THE GREAT RETURN

As if the ground would give way
as if the limestone caverns under
would open and swallow
lawn and house and little man

down into crystal splendor there
like Hoffmann's diamond mine
in Sweden, or not diamond, every
color every star inside the earth

and the earth suddenly spacious
and we, for it would be us this
happens to, would falter in brightness
and be the thick doubters that we are

but still that Eden down there
would slowly work its will in me,
the green will of hurtles things
and teach a door back in
to where we have always been
coming from, citizens of a sign

and this time we would go in again
and in and in and tell
anyone we chance to meet along the way

that this is our house after all,
this time we will never leave,
and let our sin this time be staying.

4 May 2004

<late> =====

In the politics of heart

the head heaves. An annoyance
like waiting for the elevator
before the thought begins.

Rain over Lisbon in a book.
I come home dry, not rich,
not poor, a man like a loaf of bread
some woman kneaded.

Bakers work before dawn,
the baguettes must be ready
even before the sun
knows how to shine.

Hear the bread thinking
in the oven: our life
is not like theirs, we pass
through myriad forms,

we are wheat and water,
carbon, hydrogen, at home
in food and the eater of food,
we are the measurement

inside anything that lives.

They think this way, a little
like suicide notes left behind
by people who thought better of it,

decided not to die, changed
their lives, woke up and took
a bus to Indianapolis with
no change of clothes.

4 May 2004

IN THE OTHER TIME

Who heard?

Dream did.

Who walked?

The one who couldn't.

Who died?

The one who is.

Who came back?

The one that was gone.

Who told?

The one with no mouth.

Who heard?

The sleeping one.

Who woke?

The stone beneath his head.

5 May 2004

PROXIMITY EFFECT

Close to the beloved's skin
the cautious eye detects
pores and entrances
like any other human flesh.

Where is love then
when you look close?
Is it a shimmer or a shine
around the body

an inch or two
outside the actual,
a gossamer ghastly
from so much wanting?

5 May 2004

=====

remembering Leo Hamalian

It's the way the man looked at you,
you had no doubt, no question was happening,
no answer was coming, but no doubt,
no doubt at all,

he looked at you and you could see mountains,
not the Himalayas but high, hard,
dark against a desert sky,
the colors we see here in autumn afternoons
only, but some lands, some men
see all the time.

Mountains and a man, and a woman at the well
maybe, a woman lithe as shadow
standing at a well beside him,
as if they had been there from the beginning.

And then it was ordinary again, street, library, coffee shop,
and you were just there together,
simple as that,
he looked at you as if you were there.

5 May 2004

<late> =====

Less said, not less to say,
organ grinders make traffic pause
fair ear care bonds street to street
with glad gridlock of
ordinary sound.

Who hears? Peevishly exulting an
oriole sings from tree to tree
hides in pine and you whistle it
along the air, its song
means to be answered, we all do,
fly, sing, fly, hide, sing

and the hidden word falls from the sky
like Aurelius' nostoc
I read about once
in a book that hid in my mind
like a bird in a leafy tree

leaving only its call note clear:
here, you understand this thing.

5 May 2004

CERTAIN, BECAUSE DESPERATE

Rapt in untelling
the right one waits
embedded in the wrong.

Rock finder, scheme
a better finger, scratch
chrysocola caverns
down the bad dream

to choose a decent color
uncle blue or aunt vanilla
skin on boiled milk
a knife tip lifts
nostalgia for vertical relation

2.

it meant a long before
a morning taste a cliché
a doubt house

keep waking up to
how after so
many years a beach

knew how to sleep

and there was walking there
and one who, and this logic
offended no one and yet

the wood of the jetty
rowboat commodores
sycophants of the sea

3.

enlaked, laic
skin of sun sheen on
lift out of trouble
light enough to read by

but nobody there
just the need
to keep looking
in case of in case

4.

slew of bookless wanderers
over the sandhill
poor Bible people have no world

it seems a feather
from a screaming tern
too near her nest

with all their opinions
get away with their
rules their words

now this cry of hers
the first word anybody heard
made sense

screel of Eden's closing gate
or no or nowhere you
at last the only garden

a self half erect in sand.

6 May 2004

LES CHOUCAS

Half a habit of a week
a man worsted among friends
woven to touch but not to touch
–the feeling is a little hour
the advantage is year on year
forget the feeling? –the Resistance
is what matters, red ocher
of Roussillon, the history of pain
against the animals who othered

again and again the mute arithmetic
let me just be alone with you
sorry darling I have no alone

2.

The notary's brother lied, the judge died,
no-see-ems ruled the morning light as if
but nobody knows what, where do they come from,
death, Gestapo, plague, it must be a disease
like leprosy or perjury, sometimes you can feel
the evil growing, cousins in the Milice,
powwows in the Oval Office, nothing left
to crucify, corn belt crusade, so many die,

there may not be a God but God's grace

is still abounding, random breaks of beauty
in a vengeful world, a love that listens?

3.

They're gone now, the empty friends.
Sometimes it just doesn't work, how could it,
the ledgers of desire are charged with
too many different lines of credit.
We overlap an hour maybe, and all the rest
is fruminous, the time we spend together,
I don't even know what the word means,
I just write down to tell you what I heard.
It's grainy I guess like a bushel of wheat,
futile as an albatross in Michigan, unpassioned,
willing to trade all that love for one good night's sleep.

7 May 2004

ENERGY

Energy *as big as cats*
a *network* of irrelevant
remarks becomes connection

science explains nothing—
it holds together as
many things as it can count

science is a basket
not a religion he said
a cat as big as a cat

the moon the size of the moon
science is the same as poetry
only it uses all the wrong words.

7 May 2004

ars poetica

you learn a lot when you compare
one thing to something else

all of it wrong, all of it interesting
all of it real. The real

is the most interesting of all,
the real is always wrong,

it slays you. The real
comes by night and stays.

Once I woke up without the real
and tried to stay. But as soon

as I compared one thing to another
the real came back, caught me,

immersed in this moment,
a man full of prayers in a godless world.

7 May 2004

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

Most of it we do to each other.

But not all.

Some of it comes from outside.

But outside is mostly ourselves before.

7 V 04

<late> =====

THE NATURE OF DOORS

Could the large map of the world
–the world centered more or less on Palestine–
be a door hidden from the wall,

something the house comes through and travels
yearlong into ever more legendary spaces
weird languages, pagodas, stock exchanges?

Here is the secret: a door, a door has nothing
to do with a wall in fact, a door is pure focus,
frame, permission, timing, formality, idea.

A door is pure idea. Going through is an accident.
Even a bird could do that, the king observed,
and where does anything go but the hungry sky?

7 May 2004